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CPYRGHT

Germany with and without tears

A spy who made the most of defeat...

THE GENERAL WAS A SPY. The True Story of General Gehlen and His Spy Ring. By Heinz Hoehne and Hermann Zolling. Coward, McCann and Geoghegan. \$3.95.

GEHLEN: SPY OF THE CENTURY. BY E. H. Cookridge. Random House. \$10.

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By K. S. Giniger

The first thing that must be said about both these books is that Lieutenant-General Reinhard Gehlen never was a spy.

An extremely proficient technician in the collection of intelligence, Gen. Gehlen was the very model of the efficient German bureaucrat. His undeniable talents, his knack for self-preservation and his lust for power led him to a successful intelligence career, first under Adolf Hitler, then under the occupying Americans and the Central Intelligence Agency and finally under the newborn Federal Republic of Germany. His Wehrmacht colleagues stood trial for war crimes, languished in prison camps and suffered the agonies of defeat. Gehlen hardly tasted the tears of surrender: in his mouth, their water became the wine of Allied victory.

Who is this man? Who was he?

Reinhard Gehlen entered the postwar German army in 1921. His progress was slow but, after the Nazis seized power and the General Staff, banned after Versailles, was reactivated, he was appointed to the General Staff as a major. His specialty was fortifications and operational planning. He was given staff assignments in the blitzkrieg against Poland, the campaign in France and the attack on Russia. But he had no intelligence experience.

Then, in April, 1942, his superiors, recognizing his talent for organization, made him chief of the office charged with military intelligence activities in the East, which meant Russia. Less than two years later, the redoubtable Admiral Canaris fell out of favor with Hitler and Gehlen found himself at the top of the intelligence heap.

IT WAS A SHORT VICTORY. In another two years, Gehlen was dismissed by his Nazi master. But it didn't matter very much; he had already made other plans.

These plans were to sell himself and his vast intelligence files on Soviet Russia to the victorious Americans and to fight alongside them in the war between the Allies and Russia he thought was inevitable. The success of General Gehlen's plans, the creation of a huge American-financed intelligence network known as the Gehlen Organization and the absorption of that organization as the intelligence service of the new West German state is the primary subject of the two books under consideration here.

Gehlen's "Org," staffed very heavily by old Wehrmacht, SS and SD friends, was an important instrument of American intelligence in the "cold war" period. E. H. Cookridge gives it credit for the creation of the Green Berets as an organization

of displaced persons to fight alongside the Americans and for securing the secret Khrushchev address to the 1956 Communist Party Congress. The first allegation is obviously silly; the Green Berets have always been regular U.S. Army troops. And I am told on good authority that the Khrushchev speech came to CIA from other sources.

After Gehlen and his people became part of the new German government, the Org continued to prosper under Chancellor Adenauer as it had under the patronage of Allen Dulles. But then Gehlen made the mistake of becoming involved in political conflict. This was followed by the disclosure that the Org had been penetrated by both the East Germans and the Soviets. Adenauer, the conservative, was followed by Georg Kiesinger as chancellor and Kiesinger by Willy Brandt, the Socialist. Gehlen was retired in 1968 and the race to write his story began.

HEINZ HOEHNE AND Hermann Zolling had a considerable advantage. They are investigative reporters on Der Spiegel, the German newsweekly which was writing about Gehlen when both German sources and CIA were denying he even existed. Cookridge's is the more exciting of the two books, but it is riddled with inaccuracies. The Hoehne and Zolling book is a more sober venture (Der Spiegel obviously lacks the panache of Time) but far more informative and revealing in terms of historical and political background.

But until Gehlen's own story appears next month, perhaps the comment of Maj. Gen. Sir Kenneth Strong, World War II SHAEF intelligence chief, postwar Director of Intelligence of the British Ministry of Defense and longtime acquaintance of Gehlen, will serve: "The air of mystery with which Gehlen surrounded himself has tended to increase his significance and importance in the eyes of the more sensational writers on espionage. A full appreciation of his place in the history of Intelligence must wait until all the facts can be told, but I suspect that his activities were a good deal less esoteric and more conventional and to the point than is generally believed, or possibly than he himself would perhaps admit."

K. S. Giniger, a former U.S. Army Intelligence officer, has been the publisher of both Gen. Gehlen's patron, Allen Dulles, and his friend, Maj. Gen. Sir Kenneth Strong.

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